

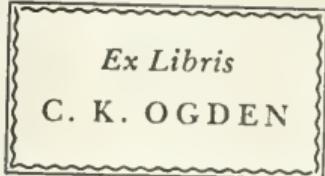
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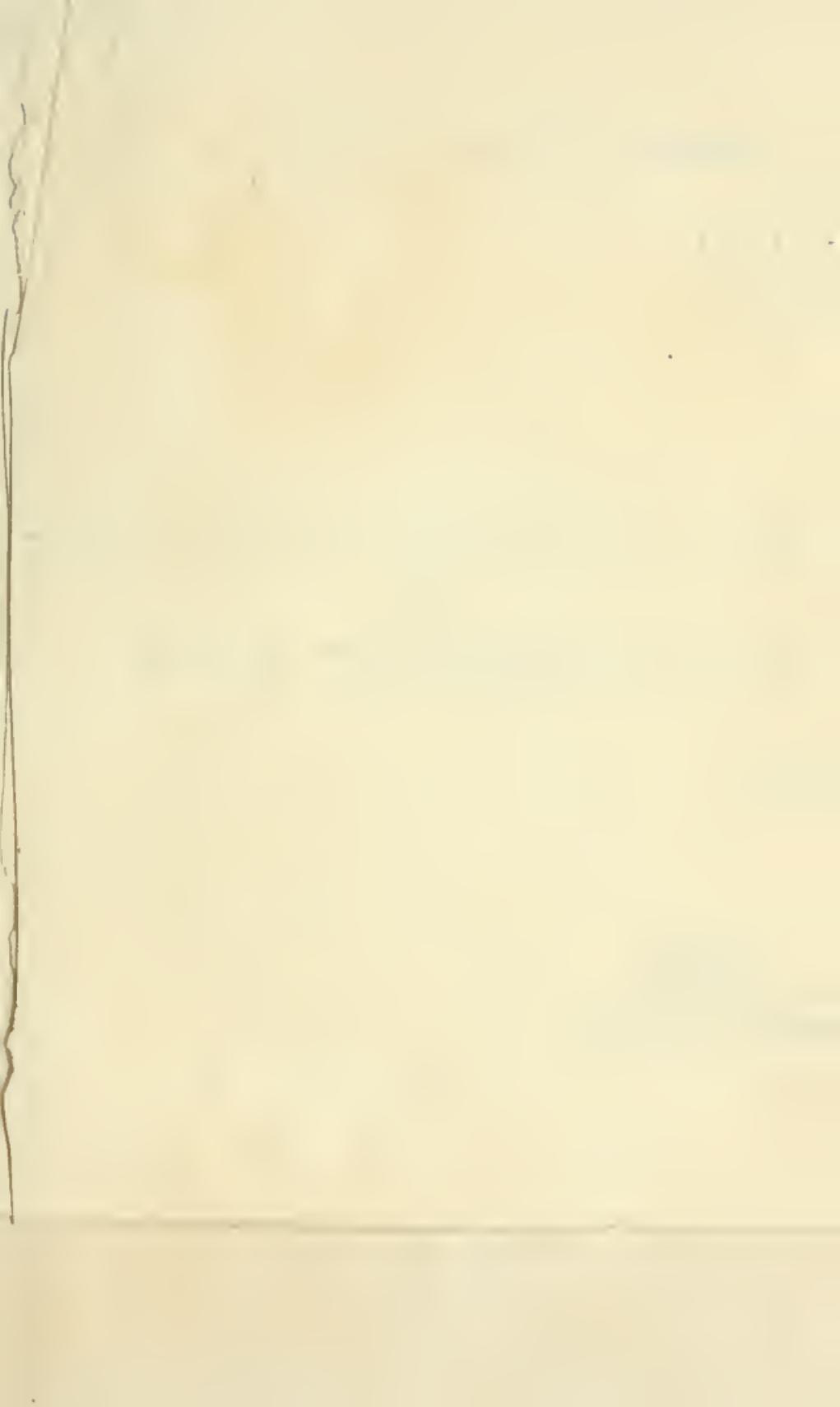
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Dear Friend,

Please excuse delay in sending the enclosed book.

I have been too busy to get down to the publishers before.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely,

Henry J. Sloane.

Towards Spiritual
Democracy
by
Henry J. Sloane

TOWARDS
SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY.

TOWARDS
SPIRITUAL
DEMOCRACY



BY
HENRY J. STONE.

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* * *

DEDICATED
to the Men and Women everywhere
who are daily endeavouring
to live and grow
in the light
of the Spirit.

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Preface



SINCE the following pages were written, there has been issued a remarkable report, under the title "The Army and Religion," giving to the world the results of the investigations of a Committee brought together by the Young Men's Christian Association to consider and interpret the religious life of the nation as revealed in the Army under war conditions. The men and women of this Committee a majority of thinking citizens, doubtless, would have elected from their various denominations and movements for broad-minded and impartial judgment, and the frankness and honesty of their report is sufficient evidence that the choice in this case was wise.

The material of their report was collected from "nearly three hundred memoranda and many hundreds of witnesses"; men and women of all ranks within the Army, as well as experienced and impartial

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civilian observers. The Committee agree that the evidence is of high quality, and that the issue of their report was greatly facilitated by the practical unanimity of the evidence on all the essentials of the inquiry.

One other fact has to be held in view, in adjudging the value of this report for the present purpose. The men whose inner thoughts and feelings, whose character and conduct have been under examination by this cloud of witnesses, form the young manhood of the nation—in other words, a considerable portion of the active thinking foundation upon which the future of the community will be built. What they think and feel, therefore, is of vital and fundamental importance. In this investigation the soul of a nation has been under the microscope.

What are the main conclusions of this unique report? They are amazing—not only for their substance, but in their frank confession of failure on the part of organised

Preface.

religion. The report admits that Christianity has very little hold on the majority of the men ; that the Churches must be held primarily responsible for this, but that the men have a vague "elemental religion."

"The men have got religion ; I am not so sure that they have got Christianity," is an expression typical of much of the evidence.

This fact, then, has to be faced by thinking men and women everywhere : that in the twentieth century after the message of peace and goodwill was delivered to humanity by Christ, a company of His followers have to confess on abundant evidence that the conventional interpretation of that message is rejected by the majority of the men of their nation!

In the minds of those who are convinced that men cannot live without religion any more than they can live without bread, the question will arise at once—What religion do the majority of the men of our nation live by ?

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When we examine the report for the evidence of this "elemental religion," we find that it is revealed in a simple faith in God, a "respect" for the character of Jesus (even in men who use His name profanely), and an almost universal comradeship. This last-named is so strong at times that it bridges all barriers of class, education, creed, even of nationality, and frequently results in amazing acts of self-sacrifice. Much of the evidence in which these self-effacing acts are recorded cries aloud for quotation, and will live in the noblest annals of human history; for it is the record of simple human service performed without the glory and excitement of battle, without even the stimulus of a conscious religion.

Commenting on this remarkable evidence, the report states:—

"We believe that the evidence in our hands is full of deep and startling meaning, not only for the Church, but for all who care for the higher life of our people; and therefore we

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have felt bound to lay it all in its fullness before the Christian mind of the nation, believing that *a new contact with reality is absolutely necessary to any further progress.*" (The italics are mine).

The following pages were written in the strong conviction that many, both within and without the Churches, who care for the higher life of our people, have already found a new contact with reality in and through a new consciousness ; that in the development and application of this consciousness there lies unlimited power for the solution of our social and international problems, and that it is leading men and women towards a World-wide Spiritual Democracy.

HENRY J. STONE.

10, *Temple Fortune Hill,*
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London, N.W.4.

October, 1919.

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Introduction



IF we had eyes only for the *outward event*, we might be excused for judging that the world had passed through the nightmare of war only to awaken to political strife, class selfishness, anarchy and confusion. Those who have learnt to read the signs in the hearts and minds of men and women, however, will indeed have abundant cause for hope and joy. For clearly, so clearly that there can remain no shadow of doubt in the mind, a new spirit, a deeper consciousness is steadily unfolding within the human soul to-day. From all sides comes evidence of this tide of the Spirit of Life, quietly flooding the inner life of men and women, shifting the centre of consciousness from its former seat in the mental and

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emotional nature into the haven of the soul. Not a few who had felt their spiritual life secure have now been overwhelmed by the oncoming wave. For it takes no account of the creeds and opinions of men ; it is not concerned with ancient ceremonies or established institutions ; it ignores our petty judgments of right and wrong, raises the humble, humbles the exalted, shakes men free of the quicksands of pride and intellect, lands together on the cool islands of a common human brotherhood the sinner and the saint, the learned and the simple. Into this great tide of the Spirit, men of all creeds and of none are being swept. It is cutting broad horizontal channels through the vertical divisions of our creeds and philosophies, and undermining the walls with which we have separated ourselves. Everywhere it cleanses, strengthens, invigorates, and flows onward through individual freedom of expression toward its own inherent unity.

Introduction.

Whence comes this Spirit ? Whither is it flowing ? Is it real and permanent, or merely a passing phase of the general upheaval of human thought ? What are the special characteristics that distinguish it from former revelations to men ? What does it imply in the outer world of human relationships ?

To investigate these fundamental problems of the new consciousness ; if not to reach a solution of the questions, to discover a pathway thither ; to seek this pathway, not by speculation or by reference to particular books or established creeds or systems of thought, but in and through the very soul-experiences we are investigating ; to do this in a spirit of sincere inquiry in which the writer and the reader may frankly co-operate in a common quest, is the simple purpose of these papers.

Briefly, I want to speak *with* you rather than to you ; speak too in the simplest terms about the present

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great spiritual unfoldment which, I believe, all in some measure experience, and which, if it be faithfully applied to life, will usher in a real spiritual democracy.

I

The Reality of the Spirit

*What are the special Characteristics
that distinguish the present spiritual
uplift from former experiences of
the kind?*

IN any attempt to answer this question, we must of necessity appear to define limits where, strictly, no limits can be defined. Let it be clearly understood, therefore, that our immediate inquiry covers only the special and distinguishing characteristics of the new consciousness.

In one sense the experience is as old as the history of man. Yet in the present manifestation, significant because it coincides with the need for rebuilding human society, two features stand clearly defined : the

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instinctive and widespread recognition of the realities of the spiritual life (with the consequent rejection of all that is unreal or merely superficial), and the realisation of the essential unity of humanity in the life of the Spirit.

When we speak together of the realities of the spiritual life in this connection, we mean—do we not?—the present living, vital realisation that our human life proceeds directly from an unseen yet real spiritual centre within ; that in this realisation we establish a deep consciousness of oneness with the all-pervading Spirit of Life. Further, that this inner Spirit is unfolding all the time into expression in the outer life, through laws as fixed and definite as the laws that control and regulate the physical universe ; that these laws of the spirit are knowable and trustworthy, precisely as the laws of the physical world are knowable and trustworthy.

We mean, further—do we not?—

Reality of the Spirit.

that this Spirit unfolds in our human life through the channel of human thought and feeling expressed in art, science, literature, philosophy and religion. To the extent that human thought and feeling correctly interpret the laws of the Spirit, the expression is simple and harmonious, bringing the true Kingdom of Heaven into life. To the extent that human thought and feeling fail to interpret and apply those laws, sorrow, confusion, and ugliness result, until we learn the better way.

To those who have entered this consciousness, these simple words, while they do not and cannot explain the experience, will be sufficient to recall it. And there is no one, surely, who has not at one time or another had a glimpse at least of this inner vision of our true relationship with the Spirit of Life. The spiritual vision is blurred at times in the very activity of the physical and intellectual senses, and the words of the Spirit become *merely* words

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that strike no response. Yet even those in whom the spiritual vision is almost blind, will admit that the ugliest chapters in human history are those in which the attempt has been made to stifle the spiritual aspirations of men by means of material forces, and that the noblest chapters are those in which the spiritual forces have triumphed over the material. Further, again and again in outlining schemes for the reconstruction of a devastated world men have summed up their deepest conviction in the words "But what is needed [to make these schemes effective] is a new Spirit." That indeed is generally recognised as the secret of any life worth living, whether individual, national, or international.

If, therefore, there is in man a spirit that ennobles him, an "undying fire" that causes him to rise superior to all the obstacles in his environment, is it possible to suppose that this spirit is an effect without

a cause, that there is no source from which it springs ? If we conclude, as surely we must, that this ennobling spirit, this " undying fire," has a cause, a source from which it springs, what can be more natural than the conscious realisation in the lesser, of its vital relationship with this Greater Cause, the meeting of this spirit in the child with the Father-Mother Spirit in whom it was born ?

Now we have spoken of the Spirit as unfolding into expression through fixed and definite laws. That is one impression, and an important one, of the realities of the new consciousness. Yet in and through these very processes, are we not more and yet more deeply conscious of a holy, almost inexpressible beneficence, a warm enfolding and sustaining *presence* ever reaching out and seeking living relationship with the human soul ? Many will already have been aware of this living, vibrating presence in those moments when, alone on the hilltops at sunset,

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or in that holy inbreathing of nature at dawn, one has entered into a consciousness of the ever-encircling and sustaining life in nature. Yet this new consciousness is an experience, more intimate, more personal, more charged with the divine quality of which all poets and seers have sought to give expression, and which is yet so inadequately expressed by our human word "love." Beautiful and holy as it is, it is not alone the fact of this communication with the Spirit that is of immediate significance. It is not only that men are in conscious communication with nature, or with the Spirit of Life itself, but that something of the divine quality of that Spirit is unfolding in the human soul, made ready perhaps by the deep experiences of recent years.

If this experience had been confined to a few earnest souls within the Church, it would have been but a variation of a periodical phenomenon

in the history of religious experience. What is both obvious and significant in the present manifestation is its complete disregard of all previous religious experience. It moves stealthily from soul to soul, working silent miracles of spiritual revolution and regeneration in the most unexpected places. It appears at first to have no connection with the recognised historical figures of religious teaching, nor does it adopt the conventional phrases in which spiritual experiences of the kind have hitherto been expressed.* Yet, as its effects on human thought and conduct become clear, one of the most startling characteristics of the new consciousness is its simple and direct interpretation, alike of the lives and the teaching of the Spiritual Masters. Indeed, to many who have been most concerned about the letter of the Law, it appears as though children, quaintly

*This fact has led the Church, where it has recognised it at all, to underestimate its power.

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confident, speak with authority of those truths the learned theologians have been trying for centuries to elucidate.

That the new consciousness is an active reality, is seen again in the prompt and spontaneous rejection of all that is superficial or merely conventional. None of the trivialities that so often pass current for the religious life will satisfy its spiritual hunger. Men, and especially those who, in close daily contact with death, have been face to face with their deeper selves, know well the spiritually real from the seeming, though they rarely can explain the process by which the certainty comes. If this spontaneous rejection of the conventional beliefs and phrases of organised religion was unaccompanied by any positive illumination regarding the true spiritual life, we might be justified in attributing it to the natural reaction from what is stable and abiding, in a world that has been torn asunder by the

shock of war ; or we might attribute it to the perverseness of human nature. What is obvious, however, to the sincere and impartial observer of the present rising wave of the Spirit, is that the rejection of the merely conventional and superficial is accompanied by a simple yet deep inner conviction of the reality of the new spiritual life centre to which access has been found. Further, it is clear that what renders the outer form so unreal and unconvincing to the new child of the Spirit, is the vividness of his inner vision of the real.

Those who see most clearly the present important changes in the inner life of humanity, are most conscious that much that is happening in the world of action *appears* to contradict everything one would expect as a result of these changes. Yet closer examination reveals that the contradiction is apparent only, and that, in reality, present events are but confirmatory evidence of

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the inner unfoldment. Where there is disturbance on the surface, one seeks the cause within. The old order—whether social, political, or religious—is preparing to defend its citadel, feeling instinctively that its very foundations are attacked.

For is it not clear to every awakened mind that no man can be conscious of his true relationship to the One Supreme Spirit of Life, without that consciousness affecting every relationship with his fellows, and, that the change of relationship to the outer life will be in direct proportion to the depth and sincerity of the new consciousness in the inner life? Quiet, and almost unobserved as the present change of the spirit is, it has already commenced to lead men away from class interests and creed worship, into the freedom of a Spiritual Democracy.

How the new consciousness is likely to affect the varied relationships in the outer life, we will now investigate together.

II

Spiritual Democracy and the Church

I WOULD appeal direct to that spiritual centre which, in varying degrees, is active in everyone. In order that we may be true travelling companions along this pathway of the spirit, it is necessary that we discard all those preconceived opinions which might impede our progress on the way ; it is necessary, when on the journey we discover new truth, that we should be alert to judge its real value, unfettered by creeds or systems of thought, however venerable. The way will be difficult if we enter it feeling that we already know where it leads, or if we have fears concerning

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our own mental and spiritual possessions ; if, in short, we cannot start on this quest as children entering a new country, with souls alive to every new impression, and minds alert to judge without reference to the land we have left behind.

In other words, this inquiry will be difficult to us if we are more concerned with the preservation of the institutions of men than with the discovery of the real spirit of life, if we are seeking excuses for the past rather than reaching after the real foundations of the future. It will be an impossible road if we enter it with the fixed belief that any particular church, or other association of men holds a monopoly of spiritual truth.

It is a road for the fearless untrammelled child of the Spirit. For such it is a road of simple spiritual delights.

Throughout the former inquiry the thought will have occurred to the reader again and again : " This

The Church.

is the concern of the Church." It is indeed; and all the while the evidence of the new consciousness has been accumulating, especially during the soul-searching period of the great war, have we not seen that faithful members of various sections of the Church, out of their own deep experience, have ministered to the children of the new Spirit? They have understood, and understanding have not hesitated to sacrifice anything and everything that formed a barrier between them and the souls of the young men aflame with vision. Fully realising the inevitable misunderstanding of their action, ministers have stripped themselves even of their office in the Church, feeling that it was a hindrance rather than a help to the true ministry of the Spirit. On the battle-fronts noble brothers of men, realising that the ordinary church services, held in a place of safety, and embodying much that had lost its original meaning

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and significance, did not meet the real soul-hunger of men, went out empty-handed to share the dangers and the hardships in which the children of the new Spirit were facing Life and Death together.

Have we not seen also that many of those who were sent out to minister did not understand the new tide that is sweeping the minds and souls of men? To their credit, many of them frankly said so, and pathetic "S.O.S." messages were flashed back to the homeland.

They said, in effect: "The men are awake to the reality of the spiritual life, but they do not want our services. What is to be done?"

Many made suggestions which were vetoed as "endangering the dignity and prestige of the Church." Not a few who went out with the passion to serve, have themselves found a new vision of life and a deeper understanding of their fellows. Already these are exercising a profound effect on the Church.

At home, the same forces had been seen at work although the change had been more gradual. There had been a frank and healthy facing up to the fact that the Church was losing its grip of the people at the very time when there was not only a universal hunger for the realities of the spiritual life, but evidence of a real unfolding of the spiritual vision. This acknowledgment has led to a more liberal spirit towards innovations in Church methods, while not a little of the new power has been harnessed to the movement for unity between the various sections, and to inter-denominational work along social, educational, and religious lines.

All these modern evidences of spiritual life have been welcome signs of the times to those, who, both within and without the Churches, have been watching and working for the dawn of a new epoch. What do they imply in their relation to the new consciousness we have been considering together ?

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I appeal here, not only to those who have witnessed the flooding of the new spiritual tide in the minds of men and women, but to those forward-looking truth lovers of all Churches and Creeds and of none. In spite of all the noble efforts of individual members of the Churches, is it not true that the Church as a whole has so far failed to become the vehicle for the expression of the new consciousness?*

Who knowing the facts can doubt it? Either the Church must open her doors wide enough to admit the rising flood, or it will sweep through, around, and over the Church.

Well may earnest souls ask: "What is to be done to meet the needs of the new spirit?" While the Church is concerned with many things—compromise on matters of belief, adjustment of the forms of services, the inter-denominational exchange of

* See Report (since issued) of the Dr. Cairns' Committee for confirmation of this.
"The Army and Religion." *Macmillan.*

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pulpits, and the ministry of women—this new tide of the spirit sweeps on. The sluice gates are open. Do we not see how every day carries some noble soul out of the Church into the ever-increasing ranks of the modern movements outside its doors ? We need not mention these movements individually ; their name is legion. It has been the fashion in certain quarters to ignore them, in others to attempt to kill them by ridicule and persecution. It is no longer possible to ignore them ; and persecution, it appears, but adds to their power. To the thoughtful they are the natural and inevitable result of lack of vitality within the Church. It is a difficult thing for the majority of men and women to break with the religion of their family, and they do not do so as a rule unless another religion or association of men provides the soul-nourishment which they need, and the Church has failed to provide.

It is in no spirit of criticism that

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we make these observations on the present situation in the Church, but rather in the spirit of impartial inquiry. It would, therefore, be out of place here to suggest remedies, except so far as a deeper realisation of the new consciousness will itself suggest remedies. Certain results, however, follow inevitably on the observations we have so far made, and these now appear in the pathway of our inquiry.

It will be agreed that the true Christian Church consists of those who have come into a living realisation of the spiritual consciousness that was in Jesus. There is now ample evidence that this consciousness is spreading with increasing power outside the Church, and further that *it is gradually ceasing to recognise in the organised Church its spiritual home.*

Useless to deplore the fact; equally useless to blame those without the Church. For in spite of the falling Church membership,

The Church.

and the general tendency to ignore the practices and observances of the organised Church, we cannot fail to observe that, judged by the life of its Founder, there is more of the real spirit of Christianity to-day than ever before.

In other words, the organised Church is no longer fully identified with the unorganised children of the Spirit. Of what avail to seek to re-establish that identity of Spirit by huge funds and super-organisation? Nothing, perhaps, save the regenerating and rejuvenating influence of a deeper realisation by its members of the One Spirit, and of their unity in that Spirit, will again restore the Church to its rightful place.

But while the Church hesitates or seeks half-heartedly for remedies, the children of the Spirit both within and without the Church are discovering a new basis for Unity.

III

The Essential Unity

IT would be reasonable to expect that a deepening and broadening of the consciousness we have considered in our former inquiries would quietly revolutionise life, not in one particular only but in all. We shall find that a change at the centre of being does indeed provide a change in like degree out to the circumference of life. One of the most noticeable characteristics in this general effect is the deepening of the sense of unity and comradeship, and this aspect of the new consciousness we will consider together in our present inquiry.

Looking back over the history of the world, do we not see how men have attained to remarkable power through the force of association

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alone? All societies, all crusades, all churches, all nationalities, all empires, are held together by this force. In this we shall recognise the result of an unfoldment of the human consciousness out of selfishness into a deeper but still partial sense of brotherhood. If we examine closely the basis of human associations, we find that they rest on certain fundamental *ideas* or a series of related ideas. Hence in the crusade we get the slogan, in the society, the articles of association, in the church, the articles of the Creed. All these represent the minimum of ideas upon which the members of the crusade, society, or church agree to associate. They may, of course, hold other ideas, but upon the ideas represented in their articles of association, they agree to serve together.

In the nation we find the basis of association less formally defined but much more real. Patriotism represents to men far more than can be set down in articles of association;

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and we shall fail in our present inquiry unless we first fully appreciate the force of the ideas underlying national consciousness. This ideal for which men have readily died, is born not alone out of present conscious ideas, but out of subconscious racial affections the result of the age-long struggle of our fore-fathers, out of common traditions, out of common religious ideas, out of customs that are symbolic of common thoughts and tendencies, out of the common effort toward national self-expression.

In the empire we find another expansion of the sense of brotherhood, combined too frequently with the dross of national pride and commercial selfishness. We shall have learnt little from those years of bitter struggle, however, if we have not realised that an empire is bound together with something more noble and enduring than self-interest. Quite apart from any question of their limitation, the basic ideas that

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call men to fight for an empire are of the same quality, although they may not be so ancient, as those which bind men in nations.

In the light of this brief outline of a few of the associations into which men are grouped, let us examine again the statement that the basis of association in all these cases is an idea or series of related ideas. We shall perhaps see this more clearly if we look back over the examples of association already mentioned. Many of these we find cut right through the purely national division, e.g., the Roman Catholic and other religions whose adherents are drawn from all nations. Certain *societies* also cut through the limits of nationality, e.g., the international labour movements, certain financial organisations, the Students' movement, Y.M.C.A., and the Boy Scouts. Further it will be seen that certain societies are not only international but inter-religious, e.g., the Theosophical Society, whose members are

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drawn from nearly all countries and many religions. From these considerations it is evident that the ideas which form the bond of our associations also limit the extent of that association. Let us now examine the operation of this idea.

At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, numerous conferences—religious, educational, scientific and industrial—composed of members of various nationalities were meeting in Europe. On the declaration of war the majority of the members of these conferences rushed back to their respective countries, and within a few weeks, in many cases, were fighting against each other in opposing armies. The bond of association which drew them together in cordial co-operation for a common end was limited to the ideas of which it was composed, whether those ideas were educational, industrial, scientific or religious. The bond was sundered when the stronger series of ideas—the ideas behind the sense of nationality were endangered.

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Let us now consider carefully whether the bonds of associations are composed solely of ideas. Do we not speak of the spirit of a country, of a religion, of a society? Is this spirit a real force in the association? May it not be part of the One Spirit we have been considering in our former inquiry?

When to all these questions we have returned an affirmative answer; when, further, we have realised that wherever even two or three of us co-operate together for human betterment, this Spirit must surely enter into our bond; when we have gladly acknowledged that, in religious bonds especially, there enters at times a remarkable expression of the One Spirit, does it not still remain true that the basis of the bond has been in the ideas of which it is composed, and not in the spirit which *at times* animates those ideas? How otherwise can we explain that the test of a man's allegiance to a society or a religion is his acceptance

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or non-acceptance of certain ideas and beliefs? How otherwise would the bond snap asunder at the point where a stronger idea or group of ideas bring sudden strain?

To what conclusions do these reflections inevitably point?

That so long as the basis of our associations rests on ideas, so long will they be subject to disruption when the limit of those ideas is reached. This will remain true whether the ideas are secular or religious, national, anti-national, or international. Do we not see how this leads inevitably to the further conclusion that if the world is to find a basis of real unity, it must rest on something more fundamental than common ideas, more fundamental even than common customs, traditions, and beliefs? It must be based on nothing less than a common consciousness of unity with the One Spirit. And this is the Essential Unity.

If our inquiry into the reality

The Essential Unity.

of the Spirit has been true to the facts, have we not realised that the Spirit is universal, that it is the Power-Centre of all life, that it cannot be limited by our ideas, but is always purifying and broadening them? Have we not seen how it flows onward and outward, finding a channel for expression in human life wherever our thoughts and ideas are in harmony with its laws?

But only where and so long as our thoughts are in harmony.

For, we observed, the Spirit does not usurp our freedom. It does not force itself upon us whether we will it or not. It floods the soul just so soon, and just to the extent that it is emptied of self, and of the sense-desires. It takes no account of class, creed, colour or country. Its tendency is always to break down barriers, not to set them up; always to dispel the illusions and limitations of separation, broadening the inner vision, and bringing in this consciousness of the Essential Unity.

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In this unfolding consciousness of our true relationship with the One Spiritual Reality in which we all live and move and have our being as common members of one Great Family, are we not witnessing to-day the dawn of a World-wide Spiritual Democracy ?

IV

The Service of the Spiritual Democracy

WE have seen how the new consciousness—the deep vital realisation of our true relationship to the One Spirit of Life—has resulted in a joyous sense of freedom. We find, however, that, precisely as the world of matter has its own obligations and responsibilities, so has the world of the Spirit. As there are certain laws of matter which must be obeyed if we are to remain in harmony with our material environment, so there are certain laws of the Spirit which must be obeyed if we are to remain in harmony with the new-found spiritual environment.

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We learn early that it is one thing to know *intellectually* of our real relationship to the One Spirit, and quite another to live in the *consciousness* of that relationship. The former may or may not affect to any extent our daily thought and conduct ; the latter is a dynamic force operating from the centre of our being and affecting everything we think or do. As we have already seen, its reality and its vital importance rest on that fact. To keep that consciousness awake and healthy, to discover and apply its laws, is the work of the new spiritual democracy. You cannot have that consciousness and keep it to yourself ; it dies in you if you do not use it.

We learn therefore that we have to serve the Spirit in the ways of the Spirit, for its own sake. This is the service of the Spiritual Democracy, and in that service the lessons of the Spirit will be learned. In these New Days we must needs know how to transmute the baser

elements in human nature into the finer spiritual forces, know how to train the mind to apply the truth with which the spirit feeds it, and how to develop those dynamic forces within the soul to their highest capacity for service. The Spirit first prompts us to serve ; then, as a result of the service, adds increased capacity and greater opportunities. Our part is but to listen, to understand, and to obey.

All this appears very simple to write, yet we know it is very difficult to apply. It demands the sacrifice of many lesser things, the faith to remain steadfast in the face of apparent failure, the courage to live your life in accordance with the laws of the new consciousness, in spite of misunderstanding, persecution, or abuse. It may serve to make this clear, if we investigate one or two applications of this law of Service.

The realisation of the Essential Unity of Life demands that we

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shall serve the Spirit in every man, irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality. To the extent that we obey this law we find ourselves in unsought conflict with those who believe that truth is contained in certain articles of belief, and that no one who does not subscribe to those beliefs can be in the truth. Or we may find ourselves in unsought conflict with those who hold that right is enthroned in the minds of the people of one nation, and error in those of another nation, and that the error can be destroyed only by defeating or destroying the people who are supposed to be in error. Wherever these two fundamental ideas have been active—the idea of special and separate interests, and the idea of a universal spiritual interest—there has been conflict, and in spite of the growth of the spirit of tolerance in matters of religion, it is still the custom for the majority to persecute (in the name of Right or Truth) the

minority whose convictions appear to oppose their own. Not infrequently the persecution will descend to abuse and slander, and at times it will still demand the lives of the persecuted.

Again, the realisation of the Essential Unity of Life will demand our friendship to all men, irrespective of whether they are saints or sinners. If you attempt to apply this consciousness of unity in the friendship of those who have sinned, even if it be only against the ephemeral popular conceptions of right, you will still be accused by those who are unable to understand or sympathise with your motive, as approving the sin.

These are only examples of the service demanded by the new consciousness, but they serve to reveal the ways of the Spirit in this connection. Does it not follow that life automatically applies the test of our faith and sincerity? If we would live in the consciousness of

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our relationship to the One Spirit, we must serve that Spirit for its own sake. If we thus serve, we come into conflict with other standards of life, and with the consequent persecution in some form. Our faith in the Spirit, and the sincerity of our service is thus tested in proportion to its effort. The more we seek to live in the fuller consciousness of the One Spirit, the greater will be the clash with established modes of thought belonging to other standards of conduct, and the sterner the test of our sincerity. The quiet conquest of our faith in the supremacy of the Spirit in little things in turn increases our capacity to serve and unfolds greater opportunities. Thus does the Spirit lure us onward and upward.

We have selected for our present inquiry examples of religious and social service, but the same laws hold true in all expressions of truth and beauty in human life. Whether you serve in the world of art, or

literature, or science, or philosophy, the process of the unfoldment of the Spirit will be the same. In the degree that you come into harmony with the One Spirit and seek to express it in service, you will find your faith in the ideal, the sincerity of your convictions, tested to breaking point by the conflict with public opinion. Only that which is sound and unshakable will bear the test, but this unshakable centre is the pure gold of the Spirit. On this the Spiritual Democracy of the New Day will be built. It is your contribution to the true Church of the Spirit. The Democracy of the New Day will be a community of those who have shared in the dangers of the pursuit of the Spirit and have tested their convictions in the crucible of the service of the Spirit. The New Day will belong to those who, humbly, but with unwearying effort, serve the One Spirit for its own sake. It has been said that war provides the adventure

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essential to the development of true manly courage. The war of the future is the war of the Spirit against the errors of the sense consciousness. It is supremely the life of adventure, for it must take all external risks at the call of the Voice within. It will demand courage to the last spark the will is capable of exercising. The time is surely coming when nations and communities will be called to this adventure, when lesser kingdoms will be risked to lift the People into the Kingdom of the Spirit in which alone is real power, in which alone Life can fully be realised. The hope of that Day is in the faithful lives of those who serve the Spirit now.

But the life of the Spirit is not all conflict, and there is much joy and beauty by the way.

V

The Joy of the Spirit

THERE is a joy of the senses, and a joy of the Spirit. We soon learn that the former is dependent on outer circumstances and conditions, while the latter expresses itself in spite of outer conditions. It is often most active when outer circumstances are most adverse.

True joy comes when the soul is emptied of the sense of separateness, and realises its freedom in a sense of oneness with its source—the One Spirit. That sense may come in many ways. It may come by way of true work, which is to serve the Spirit for its own sake as we have seen. This is active worship of the One Spirit. It may

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come by meditation and communion. This is the silent worship of the Spirit. It may come by great sacrifice of self for an ideal, either in a single act of renunciation, or in a series of separate renunciations of the lesser heart-desires in the pursuit of the Spirit. This is the joy of attainment.

Once we have tasted the Joy of the Spirit, not to be in conscious harmonious relationship to it is death; to live in close and continual vital contact with it is Life. To be faithful even in the apparently little things to the lead of the Spirit, is to know the Joy of the Spirit whatever the outer sacrifice that faithfulness demands. It is for this reason that the captives sing in their captivity, and the martyrs in the very midst of the flame. The Spirit is no vague imagination, no question of ceremonial or ritual or blind belief, or the marshalling of many "members." It is dynamic. It has dominion over the sense

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world and demonstrates that dominion quietly but with certainty and permanence. When the soul finds its home in the Universal Spirit, it begins to create in the power of the Spirit. To be used of the Spirit is the real joy of the soul. In whatever form the life of the Spirit manifests itself, in quiet service of one's fellows, in the beauty of line or colour, in the harmony of sound, or the poetry of words, to know the flow of the creative forces is the highest reward of the awakened life. Other rewards may come, but they are secondary, and become stumbling blocks in the path to the Spirit unless they are so treated. To mistake the shadow for the substance is to deaden the soul. To realise fully the reality and the unconquerable power of the Spirit is Light and Life and Joy.

For a long time men seek what is often falsely called "substance"—material possession. Fretfully, eagerly they pursue it, even to the

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exclusion of all real "life." And often they get what they seek—losing the Joy of the Spirit in getting it. Truly blessed is he that fails in this false quest, if thereby he can know the Spirit and the Joy of the Spirit.

For the Spirit is known only to those who grow in the consciousness of their oneness with all Life ; and the Joy of the Spirit is known to those who, having this consciousness are faithful to its progressive leading, living daily in vital co-operation with its creative impulses.

VI

Spiritual Democracy and International Life

IT will be seen that the unfolding realisation of the Essential Unity of Life and its application in the service of the Spirit will result in a new international life. It often has been said that the international conflicts of the past have been inevitable. If by this is meant that the sense of separate interests and the racial antagonisms which in the past have animated the diplomatic relations between States have rendered conflict inevitable, the conclusion could hardly be disputed.

To-day, and not for the first time, we have sought to embody in a World Covenant tardy acknowledg-

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ment that the world is really a Unity and not a number of warring factions. Through a League of Nations, mankind is registering his new consciousness of the oneness of human life, and every lover of mankind will welcome the sign. "But," men are asking anxiously, "will the new League make another war impossible?" In other words, will it render lasting peace inevitable? It provides the necessary organisation, the machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes arising between nations. It seeks, by setting up for the first time in human history, a super-national body that shall give authority to the collective will of mankind, as a tribunal before which the self-seeking activities of separate nations shall be judged. It raises the normal relations between nations above the plane of brute force. To this extent it indicates our world consciousness evolving out of the region where might is mistaken for right. It makes war (the descent to dominion

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by force) difficult and somewhat more remote, but at present, it does not render it impossible. It leaves the way open for a gradual descent into another world orgy of uncontrolled force. When the collective will of humanity embodied in the League of Nations is rejected, economic force will be used to starve the unsatisfied nation or nations into surrender. When this fails, the guns and the gas, the tanks, the bombing planes, and whatever diabolical engines of destruction men can invent or improvise, will be let loose in vaster numbers than ever before, and the world will become a hell before which the years 1914—1918 will pale.

These are the possibilities which every human being on this planet must face.

Is it not clear that precisely as war is the inevitable result of a law-governed sequence of events from the errors of the sense-self consciousness, with its consequent struggle

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for its own, so is peace inevitable in the consciousness of oneness with all humanity in the One Spirit? To the extent that this consciousness of oneness possesses us, we lose the sense of personal "possession." Having nothing to lose, we gain that peace which no one can steal. Is it not clear how this consciousness will draw all men, without distinction of race, together into the One Spirit until our international life is revolutionised? No League of Nations which exists to "protect" men from each other can do that. At best it can but prepare the way by its appeal to the collective reason for the more positive action of the Spirit.

For let us not imagine the new consciousness justifies an attitude of *laissez-faire* towards the relations of men. Indeed it is just because in our old sense-self consciousness we have failed to meet, outside a limited circle, our obligations to each other, that wars have come. We cannot live independently even

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as nations. Alone, or merely seeking our "own" we are incomplete. We are part of each other in the Spirit, therefore in our outer relationships we cannot ignore our oneness without strife and confusion. The new consciousness reveals our oneness, and demands that we shall live as members of one another in all our relationships.

We are therefore responsible for expressing this oneness positively, not only in our personal relations with one another, but internationally.

If the new League of Nations is to be anything more than a mere court of law in which, at great expenditure of time and energy, the disputes arising out of the sense-self consciousness are deliberated and possibly adjusted, there must be behind it and animating it a silent league of the Spirit, broad-based on the collective consciousness of a Spiritual Democracy. In the positive action and interaction of this real force, co-operation and

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mutual service will build up a new international life in place of the old destructive and disintegrating forces of competition and rivalry. The silent spiritual power is there ready for this work, in spite of all the noise and display of the false powers of material force. The men and women of the New World are quietly being prepared. At any time the full tide of the Spirit may flood in over the sands of the sense-self consciousness, sweeping away the old barriers between nations and bringing together the new spiritual democracy in a world built for love and service, beauty and joy.

VII

Self-Determination

IN nothing can we see the application of the new consciousness so clearly as in the movement towards self-determination in all the associations of men. It is true that the movement has been chiefly concerned with the problems of international relations, and it is evident, in events and documents now historical, that those who proclaimed the idea most loudly have found it difficult of application in a world still seeking to rule by domination.

The idea of self-determination, however, is now born in the hearts of men; it is struggling into life in spite of age-long errors and prejudices. Nor does it really matter

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that it has come to birth in connection with our larger problems of world government. In reality it is a principle of life, and eventually it will be applied to all human relationships. Those who have caught a vision of its possibilities will see how many of our vexed problems—social, industrial, educational, religious and international—it will solve. Let our present inquiry seek to establish its true relation to the new consciousness we are considering together.

Following closely the consciousness of our relationship to the One Spiritual Life, there comes the realisation that, within the laws of that Life, we are free ; we ourselves must determine just how we react to the life about us. It is true that there is a constant pressure of men and circumstances from without, and the ever-increasing pressure of an inner illumination leading us to accept certain lines of conduct and to reject others. Both the outer

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and the inner pressure may make it difficult to act in certain ways, may indeed impose certain temporary limitations to our activities, but the choice of direction, the ultimate aim, of good or evil, even the choice between life or what we know as death, are ours alone. The Spirit, whatever it may desire with us, leaves us free to choose.

In the fuller realisation of this freedom of the Spirit which the new consciousness is bringing to men, does it not seem strange that men in all their relationships—family, industrial, national, international, even in their educational and religious relationships—are ever seeking to coerce each other? In every one of those departments of life, history records nothing but the change of the seat of power from one man, or one set of men, to another. Is it greatly to be wondered at that our world history is a history of strife; that children are taught the story of our national development

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in a series of battles and the changes of a royal house ; that men lose all the joy in the beauty of a mountain range in a quarrel over it as a national boundary ? Is it surprising that the followers of a gospel of goodwill should be separated into a thousand sects ? How indeed could it be otherwise ? If it be true that we are all children of the One Spirit, what do we expect but confusion if we deliberately seek to reverse that law and, being the victims of fear and suspicion ourselves, seek to rule others by fear ?

If it be true that we are all free men and women, members of one family under an all-wise Father-Mother Spirit, what could result but the present world chaos if we have tried to set up imaginary boundaries, to exaggerate intellectual differences and racial customs, to be so deeply concerned about our outer possessions that we blot out all consciousness of our inner oneness of Spirit ? If goodwill and mutual co-operation

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are really the laws of life, what can result but sorrow and death if we continue to base our international relations on hatred and suspicion, with all the unholy brood of armaments, secret diplomacy, espionage and camouflage, and our commercial relations on wasteful and extravagant competition ? What is our world tragedy of poverty, famine, and disease but the Law of Life seeking to bring us again into harmony with Itself ; telling us, if we could but listen, to readjust our lives from the innermost to the outermost in accordance with Its own unassailable Harmony ?

The new consciousness is teaching men and women that Life is one, that the Spirit of Humanity is one ; that it evolves through us under fixed and definite laws ; that if we frame our lives in accordance with those laws, if we aim at unity through co-operation, and not separation through competition, there is abundant harmony and prosperity for

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every living son of this Father-Mother Spirit.

As this consciousness develops in the soul of men, self-determination will become the law of our life. Men will no more think of dominating the free expression of another's life, than they will of injuring their own right hand. It will be seen ever more and more clearly that a true sense of responsibility cannot be forced into men, but is developed by use in that freedom which the Spirit gives us as a first right in our own inner lives. Already the idea is invading our life at various points—educational, industrial, and international.

Many foolishly denounce it, because it causes friction. Friction with what? Is the old life of strife so desirable that it must not be disturbed? We fear for a long time the disturbances of the established order, much more than we fear the widespread pain and suffering that order involves. But as

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men and women become conscious of the freedom of the One Spirit, nothing is more important than the establishment of that freedom in the lives of men. In a flash, as though a white light illuminated them, the causes of our strife and disorder are seen. Men, often with really noble intentions, seek to coerce and to dominate their fellows in direct opposition to their real spiritual nature. Others allow themselves to be dominated in direct opposition to their own spiritual nature.

The new consciousness of the Spirit is setting men free of this slavery on both sides. Even where that consciousness has not yet come in its fullness, men are groping after the idea of self-determination, feeling vaguely the error of the old idea of rule by force. Even where the vast possibilities of the new order are not fully envisaged, reason alone is teaching men and women everywhere that it is not sufficient to dethrone the spirit of domination in one

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country, or in one form of national government ; the idea itself must be replaced by the idea of freedom, the very spirit must be swept out of all countries and all forms of government in all our relationships, by the establishment in the hearts of men and women of the spirit of self-determination under the laws of the One Spirit.

Men fear what they call the licence of this new idea, only because they have greater faith in their own power than they have in the laws of life. When it is seen with what mathematical certainty life's laws operate that fear will gradually disappear, for it is but the illusion of the sense world.

There is no room in the life of the One Spirit for domination and pride of power. It is on the foundation of this Spirit that the soul of the nations is now being built ; and in this new life self-determination will become the natural mode of expression. In the world of

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the Spirit we have been considering together, the idea of domination by men evaporates under the power of our free and unfettered acceptance of the guidance of the Spirit. On this and this alone will the Spiritual Democracy be based.

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